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THE TORQUE·TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE 1937-1938 BUICK CLUB • FOUNDED 1980

Volume VII · Number 4

THE TORQUE·TUBE

THE NEWS PUBLICATION FOR MEMBERS OF THE 1937 1938 BUICK CLUB · FOUNDED 1980

VOL. VII, NO. 4 • JANUARY 1989

·William E. Olson, Editor·

·842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, Ohio 43235·

Club News

Happy New Year to all. We are, I feel, starting 1989 with a fine issue, except for the Parts Ads, which are slightly improved but still skimpy. Glenn Seymour (#345), who provides our Annual Index (included in this issue), furnished along with the index a recipe for that perennial favorite, fruitcake. I have thus deferred the threatened spinach souffle. Unless the ads pick up, however, you'll get it: I do not make idle threats. Issue 3 I did not consider one of my better efforts — nor one of the printer's either, especially on the oil pump photos. He has promised to do better, and we both offer apology . I will do better to the extent that you provide articles, comments, tips, photos, ads, etc. Dug Waggoner's non-traditional version of Kris Kringle was of course on the front cover of Issue 3, as it has been now for three Christmases. I felt I didn't need to identify the back cover on Issue 3 any more than the front. "A la Recherche du Temps Perdu" — see Vol. VI, Nos. 5 and 6.

As in the past, there will be no issue labelled "February." Number 5 will come out in early March.

Cover Cars

Doug Nelson (#51) parked his 1938 Century coupe in a pre-war "garage" on a foggy Sunday in Oregon. Doug and his lovely wife Kay love these period re-creations, and they got a real chance to show off last summer. See the next issue.

Both its owner and its color being featured in this issue, it seemed fitting to show you (for the second time) the 1937 model 80-C of Edward Patrick ("Pat") Moyer (#665), a transplanted Americano now living in British Columbia. It's Samarra Beige. (Photo also appeared in Vol. VI, No. 3.)

1937 COLORS — WHAT'S IN A NAME?

Some time ago, we considered the names of 1938 Buick colors and found that all are named for noteworthy painters: Rembrandt Black; Boticelli Blue; Raphael Green; and so on. Certainly, colors are aptly named after painters. What of 1937? This appears more obscure; after considering the question at length in my Off Moments, however, I have concluded that all 1937 color names (save perhaps one) allude to British royalty or officialdom, or to the British Empire. Let us go through the list and see.

500 - Imperial Black. The reference to empire is clear.

501 - Chancellor Blue. The "chancellor" is a British high official or judge; thus, e.g. the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

502 - Coronary Green. The reference is not to heart attacks (coronary thrombosis) but to crowns, and thus to royalty. (Corona, Latin for "crown".)

503 - Sandringham Maroon. Sandringham, an English country estate purchased in 1861 by the Prince of Wales (later Edward VII), was the locus of the death of George V in 1936. (George V was succeeded by McLaughlin-Buick fancier Edward VIII who did not last long as King, but that is another story.)

504 - Sudan Blue. The Sudan, in Africa, was part of the Empire until the 1950's, ruled in collaboration with Egypt. The victory of Lord Kitchener's Anglo-Egyptian army over the Mahdist rebels at Khartoum on the Blue Nile is 1898, avenging the death of General Gordon, is a celebrated piece of British military history. Again, the year 1936 may figure in: the Anglo-Egyptian Treaty of 1936 ratified the collaborative governance of the Sudan.

505 - Wellington Grey. The Duke of Wellington's armies defeated Tippoo Sahib and the Mahratta Chiefs in India (1796-1805), drove the French out of Spain in the Peninsular War (1809-13), and creamed Napoleon at Waterloo (1815). He later became Prime Minister.

506 - Windsor Grey. The family name of English Royalty, adopted by Geroge V in 1917. The king did not like the German name "Wettin," which was the family name of his grandfather, Prince Albert of Saxe-Coburg, and rid himself of it — understandably enough — during the Great War.

507 - Ottawa Blue. Ottawa is of course the capital of Canada, which was the largest single dominion in the Empire. The Ottawas were an Algonquian Indian tribe involved in the French and Indian Wars, and gave their name to a river on which the city was established. Chief Pontiac was an Ottawa.

508 - Samarra Beige. This is the hard one. Samarra is a city in what is now Iraq, on the Tigris. Its history goes back many centuries, but the connection — if any — with the British Empire is unknown to the Editor. British members, can you provide a clue? Samarra Beige is an interesting color, more to my eye a light olive green than beige, and is smashing when set off by red wheel stripes and black leather upholstery. An Appointment in Samarra is the title of John O'Hara's first published novel (1934). The book - which I have not read — deals with people in Pennsylvania, not Mesopotamia. It was considered racy or even vulgar by some, and launched O'Hara's long career as a popular novelist. The chief characters' name is "English" but that does not seem a sufficient connection. In any event, the hero (if he is such) ends up committing suicide, and the phrase "appointment in Samarra" has become a euphemism for an unexpected rendezvous with the Grim Reaper. Samarra and Samarra Beige are referred to in subsequent pages herein, in surprising ways.

509 - Bengal Brown. Bengal is not only the home of tigers, but also a region of the Indian Sub-continent, now divided between India and Bangladesh. British forces took Bengal from the Mogul Emporer in 1764. The Bengal Lancers were, I believe, an elite unit of the British Indian army. (Not an allusion to the Cincinnati football team.)

510; 512 - Hampton Grey. This seems to be an old English name. Hampton Court Palace, now a museum, was a royal residence in the 16th and 17th Centuries. The Hampton Court Conference was held there in 1604 to find agreement between the Puritans and the Established Church, with results most unsatisfactory to the Puritans, some of whom sailed west a few years later.

511 - Balmoral Green. Balmoral Castle was built in Scotland by Queen Victoria in 1854 and remains a summer residence of the Royal Family.

So that's it: the best rationalization of 1937 names I can make. Who thought up these names? Who thinks them up today? — auto makers are still doing it. Did the owners use the names? They don't now, and I don't suppose they did then, except maybe for the unusual colors. Moreover, Buick used some colors over several model years, changing the name but not the formula: thus, for example, Chateau Green (1936) became Coronary Green (1937), Van Gogh Green (1938), and Verde Green (1939-1949 and maybe beyond). Same color. I can't tell you the "official" names of the colors on any modern car I've had, except for my wife's VW, which is done in an odd hue called "Polar Silver." That's a sort of light olive-greenish, grayish metallic. Come to think of it, it looks a good deal like Samarra Beige.

FOR THE BOOKWORM

I assume most of you can read British English (as distinguished from Americanish) and stumble through a bit of French now and then. Even if you can't, I recommend a volume I received for Christmas: Cars of the Thirties and Forties by Michael Sedgwick (Beekman House - Crown Publishers, New York, 1986). Sedgwick is an Englishman and an authority on automobiles world-wide. The book was originally brought out in 1979 by AB Nordbok of Sweden. What I have seems to be the American version of this, but unlike some book "repops" the quality is quite good, and the price — $15 in a "bargain book" outlet — reasonable enough. There are 450 illustrations (200 in color) and the text is both witty and informative, and full of British drollery and whimsicality. (The best American humor strikes a heavy blow in the midriff; per contra, British humor (or humour), while by no means above slapstick, tickles the fancy, and when well-executed the crescendo of tickling leaves the recipient giddy.) As seems inevitable today when books are written in one country, laid out and printed in another, and published in yet a third, there are a few errant photo captions and such but these are minor flaws. I guarantee you will be entertained and will obtain knowledge both meaty and trivial. (An example of the latter: the Volvo Carioca. What did it look like? A Chrysler Airflow! Was it a success? Is the Dalai Lama Jewish?) Regrettably, while two whole pages are given to illustration and description of a 1936 Buick, the '37s and '38s receive short shrift. But you can read about and see pictures of them in here.

BUICK CALENDARS

The San Diego Chapter of the BCA sells a very nice full-color calendar featuring 12 different Buick cars. The "January car is Paul Culp's 1938 Century, in a photo very similar to one that appeared on a Torque Tube cover last year (March 1988). The calendars are $6.00 each from San Diego Chapter BCA, P. O. Box 773, El Cajon, CA 92022.



THE BUICK CREST

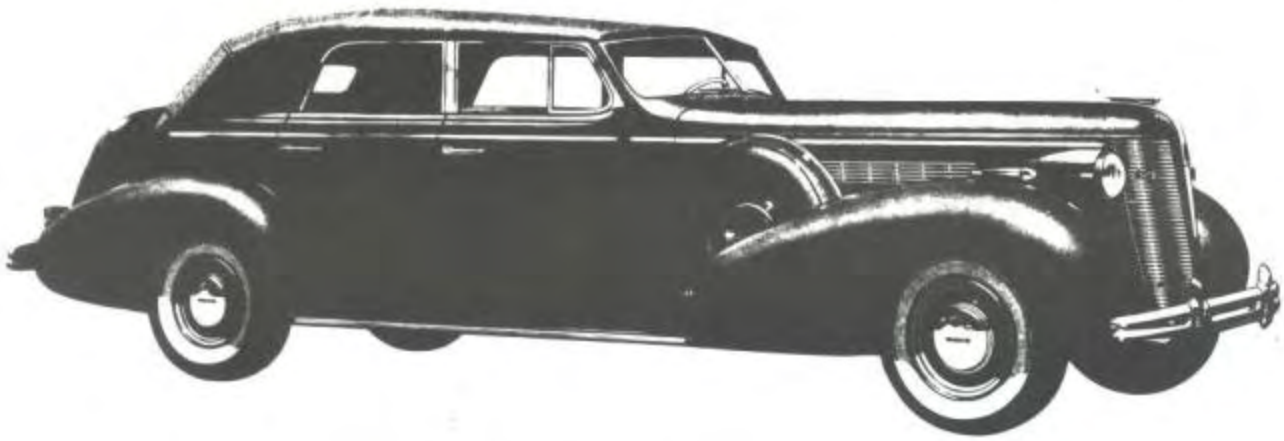
One member wrote this: "What does the Buick emblem symbolize? The stag (?) is at the upper right and the cross is at the lower left. Maybe deer crossing?" Well, it is all very well to be flippant, but there is a serious answer: the "crest" is the coat of arms of David Dunbar Buick's Scottish ancestors. The crest was put on cars first in 1937; after decades of being the forgotten man in Buick history, David was up front again, right on the grille. Unlike the made-up emblems used by some manufacturers, this one is absolutely authentic and genuine. The design was executed from a description in the 1851 edition of Burke's Peerage, the authoritative, definitive repository of information on the heraldry and nobility of the British Isles. The "stag" is a "buck." The family name was originally "Buik," close to Middle English "buk" (a male deer or goat) and one assumes that is how the buck's head got there. The origin of the checkered bend and the pierced cross is obscure.

1989 EASTERN CLUB MEET
SEPTEMBER 14-17, 1989

Full details on this were included in Issue 2. As of January 1, all of two members had signed up: Randy Dozier from Tennessee, and one of my fellow-Ohioans, Lou Wildt. Maybe the three of us, Randy, Lou and I, will have a nice little get-together somewhere, and we will forget about the Meet. I did a lot of work on this, folks: does anybody give a damn? If there is not a greater show of interest by March 1, I will give serious consideration to scrapping the whole business. If you absolutely can't make a commitment now, send me a postcard saying you hope to come. Another set of forms is included in this issue. Based on the showing in Flint in 1987, I told the sales manager at Mohican Lodge we would probably use 50 rooms, maybe more. Obviously, however, the Club did not have the funds to make deposits on rooms. So if someone else takes them, we are out in the cold. The Flint Meet was great. This one should be just as good, or better. What are you all waiting for?

Five-Passenger Four-Door Streamline Sport Sedan
MODEL 67

Getting Down to Cases



BY E. P. ("PAT") MOYER (#665)

Ever eager to please our Editor and Leader, I joined the Buick Club of America. On November 30 my first copy of the Buick Bugle graced my mailbox. Such was my impatience to start reading it that I broke into a trot a couple of times on the way home, for a total of 30, maybe 35, feet. With trembling hand I tore open the envelope and started reading. In vain I looked for dirty jokes told in Latin, for bawdy Bardy quotations, for humor, asperity, harangues, denunciations, praise, guidance — all the things that make life worthwhile. With all due respect for the Bugle, it seems, shall we say, rather conventional when lined up hubcap-to-hubcap with The Torque Tube.

Enough. Comparisons are said to be odious. I could be on the rack for heresy, sedition, treason, gawd knows what else. But I do in all sincerity believe we must have the most literate, erudite, and articulate newsletter editor around.

Not but what he pulls a fast one on us occasionally. For example? Well, sure — Case No. 1: on Page 7 of Vol. VII No. 2 Bill gave us a perfectly splendid tirade on one of my pet peeves — Buick's use of "phaeton" for their convertible sedans. (I believe they must have thought it sounded Continental.) It's precisely like calling a convertible coupe a roadster. Bill tore into that subject like a true believer, a zealot. He had me on my feet cheering when he announced, "'Convertible sedans' is what they are, and that is what I am going to call them." (Right on, Bill!)

Now, Gentle Reader, turn the page and make your way down to the penultimate* sentence in the first paragraph on Page 8. "This is very close to the window John decided was the 'intended' window for 1938 PHAETONS (my emphasis) and ...."

The "P" word, and he used it just 11 lines after saying he wouldn't use it!

Well, that's the nice thing about being an editor. He tells us to follow the style book, but he deviates from it whenever he likes.

Now, Dearly Beloved, indulge me while I get serious (more or less) about Case No. 2. On Page 7 of Vol. VII No. 1 we have a photo of "a young student of the classic auto" inspecting a '38 convertible sedan. If the kid wants to study classic autos, he's

*That means next-to-last. Pat is trying some erudition on us. — Editor.

in the wrong spot, because only 90-series Buicks are classics by Classic Car Club of America criteria. (With the exception that lesser series Buicks from 1931-1942 may qualify for classic status if they have sufficiently interesting custom bodies.)

So who gave the CCCA the right to say what is and what is not a classic car? I don't know that anybody did, because who is so empowered? The CCCA seems to have taken onto itself the right and responsibility to make those determinations.

So shall we give those arrogant bastards the one-finger salute?

Or should we, perhaps, acknowledge that maybe it's not a bad idea to have someone deciding questions of classicity?

It's not quite good enough to dismiss the subject with "Who cares whether it's a classic or not," because a glance through the cars for sale ads in your newspaper will show you that a lot of people out there care about having a "classic car." Some gleanings from the daily newspaper I read: "Classic '66 Chev Nova"..."Classic '72 Chev Belair"..."Classic VW Bug" (small rear window)..."Classic '67 Camaro"..."Classic 55 Chev 2-door hardtop"..."Classic 1926 Model T" (made by the millions, sold new for about $265, cost Henry $95 per copy to produce)..."Classic '67 Dodge Dart"...and on and on.

OBVIOUSLY anyone can call any car ever made a classic. But once there is no discipline in the use of the term it becomes meaningless — and once meaningless its use becomes pointless.

There is hope, however. CCCA standards do change. I joined the club in 1954, at which time I had three Packards — a 1937 Super Eight club sedan, a 1937 V-12 seven-passenger sedan, and a 1938 V-12 club sedan. Splendid big cars, but at that time none of them was a "classic." They were all closed cars and they had factory bodies. Today they're all on the CCCA list of classics.

Maybe if I keep my 1937 80C long enough —

Not to labor the point, but — I know perfectly well that the kid down the street with the '67 Mustang is going to call it a classic, and more power to him. It's his pride and joy and "classic car" is strong medicine to him. I think those of us who belong to special-interest 1930s car clubs should at least know which are and which are not classics. For your amusement I'm sending Bill a current CCCA list of classic cars. Maybe he'll have space enough to use it. Just might be cars on that list you've never heard of.

What happened to my Packards? Glad you asked -
"If you have tears, prepare to shed them now —" (Olson's not the only one who can call on Shakespeare.)*

In December of 1956 I had a chance to get on the Seattle Times. I had to leave St. Paul fast. I didn't have time to advertise the cars in Motor Trend. Best I could do was ads in the St. Paul and Minneapolis daily newspapers.

I sold the Super Eight for $25 and the two Twelves as a pair for $200.

Today those three Packards would fetch 60, maybe 65 thousand quids, total.

That's the way things were in 1956.

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*Julius Caesar, Act III, sc. 2; Mark Antony's oration upon Ceasar's death — Editor.

Approved List of Classic Cars 1925 - 1948

A.C. — All
ADLER — Application required
ALFA-ROMEO — All
ALVIS — Speed 20, 25, and 4.3-litre
AMILCAR — Supercharged Sports model only - application required for others
ARMSTRONG-SIDDELEY — Application required
ASTON MARTIN — All 1927-1939 - application required for others
AUBURN — All 8 and 12-cylinder models
AUSTRO-DAIMLER — All
BALLOT — Application required
BENTLEY — All
BENZ — Application required
BLACKHAWK — All
BMW — 327, 328, 327/328, 335 only
BREWSTER — Heart Front Fords, Heart Front Buick - others, application required
BROUGH SUPERIOR — Application required
BUCCIALI — TAV8, TAV30, TAV12, and Double Huit - application required for others
BUGATTI — All
BUICK — 1931 - 1942 series 90, Custom bodies on other series require application
CADILLAC — All 1925 through 1935; All 12 and 16-cylinder; 1938 - 1941: 60 Special; 1936 - 1948: all 67, 70, 72, 75, 80, 85, 90 series
CHENARD-WALCKER — Application required
CHRYSLER — 1926 through 1930 Imperial 80; 1931 Imperial 8 Series CG; 1932 CG and CH; 1933 CL; 1934 CW; 1935 CW; 1936 CW; Newports and Thunderbolts; custom bodies on other series require application
CORD — All
CUNNINGHAM — All
DAGMAR — 25 - 70 Model only
DAIMLER — 8-cyl. & 12-cyl. models; application required on others
DARRACQ — 8-cylinder cars, and 4-litre, 6-cylinder cars only
DELAGE — Model D-8 (4-cylinders NO); application required on others
DELAHAYE — Series 135, 145, 165 (4-cylinders NO), application required on others
DELAUNAY BELLEVILLE — 6-cylinder cars only
DOBLE — All
DORRIS — All
DUESENBERG — All
duPONT — All
EXCELSIOR — Application required
FARMAN — Application required
FIAT — Application required
FN — Application required
FRANKLIN — All models except 1933 and 1934 Olympic Six
FRAZER NASH — Application required
GRAHAM PAIGE — Custom bodied only, and individual application is required
HISPANO SUIZA — All
HORCH — All
HOTCHKISS — Application required
HUDSON — 1929 Series L, all others NO
HUMBER — Application required
INVICTA — All
ISOTTA-FRASCHINI — All
ITALA — All
JAGUAR — 1946 - 1948 2½ Litre, 3½ Litre (Mark IV); (4-cylinders NO)
JENSEN — Application required
JORDAN — Speedway Series 'Z' only
JULIAN — Application required
KISSEL — 1925 and 1926: all models; 1927: 8 - 75; 1928: 8 - 90 and 8-90 White Eagle; 1929: 8 - 125 and 8-90 White Eagle; 1930: 8-125
LAGONDA — All except Rapier
LANCHESTER — Application required
LANCIA — Application required
LaSALLE — 1927 through 1933 only
LINCOLN — All L, K, KA and KB; 1941: 16811; 1942: 26811
LINCOLN CONTINENTAL — All
LOCOMOBILE — All models 48 and 90; 1927: 8-80; 1928: 8-80; 1929: 8-80
MARMON — All 16-cylinder; 1925: 74; 1926: 74; 1927: 75; 1928: E 75; 1930: Big 8; 1931: 88 and Big 8
MASERATI — Application required
MAYBACH — All
McFARLAN — All
MERCEDES — Application required
MERCEDES-BENZ — All 230 and up, and K, S, SS, SSK, SSKL, Grosser and Mannheim, except application required for 1946-1948
MERCER — All
MG — 1935 - 1939 SA, 1938 - 1939 WA, application required. Others NO
MINERVA — All except 4-cylinder
MOON — Custom bodies only, and individual application is required
N.A.G. — Application required
NASH — 1930 Twin Ignition 8, 1931 Series 990, 1932 Series 990, Advanced 8, Ambassador 8, 1933 - 1934 Ambassador 8, application required. Others NO
PACKARD — All sixes and eights 1925 through 1934; all 12-cylinder models; 1935 Models 1200 through 1208; 1936 Models 1400 through 1408; 1937 Models 1500 through 1508; 1938 Models 1603 through 1608; 1939 Models 1703 through 1708; 1940 Models 1803 through 1808; 1941 Models 1903 through 1908; 1942 Models 2004 through 2008 plus 2023; 1946 and 1947 Models 2106 and 2126; all Darrin-bodied; custom-bodied cars in other series require application
PEERLESS — 1926 - 1928, Series 69; 1930 and 1931, Custom 8; 1932, Deluxe Custom 8
PEUGEOT — Application required
PIERCE-ARROW — All
RAILTON — Application required
RAYMOND-MAYS — Application required
RENAULT — 45 H.P.; application required for others
REO — 1931 through 1933 Royale 8-31, Royale 8-35; Royale 8-52; and Royale Custom 8 and 1934 N1, N2 and 8-52. Others NO
REVERE — All
RILEY — Application required
ROAMER — 1925: 8-88, 6-54e and 4-75; 1926: 4-75e and 8-88; 1927, 1928, 1929: 8-88; 1929: 8-125; 1930: 8-125
ROCHET-SCHNEIDER — Application required
ROHR — All
ROLLS-ROYCE — All
RUXTON — All
SQUIRE — All
S.S. and S.S. JAGUAR 1932 through 1940 — S.S.1; S.S.90; S.S. Jaguar and S.S. Jaguar 100; (4-cylinder NO)
STEARNS KNIGHT — All
STEVENS DURYEA — All
STEYR — Application required
STUDEBAKER — 1929-1933 President; (all others NO)
STUTZ — All
SUNBEAM — 8-cylinder and 3-litre twin-cam only
TALBOT — All 105C and 110C
TALBOT LAGO — All 150C
TATRA — Application required
TRIUMPH — Dolomite 8 and Gloria 6 models only
VAUXHALL — 25/70 and 30/98 only
VOISIN — All
WILLS SAINTE CLAIRE — All
WILLYS-KNIGHT — Series 66, application required

Courtesy of the Classic Car Club of America, Post Office Box 443, Madison, N.J. 07940

EDITOR'S COMMENT: First, I thank Pat for the words of praise. I do not, however, blush with modesty, for it is perfectly clear to me that I am, in truth, "the most literate, erudite and articulate newsletter editor around." (At least in old-car circles: some of those "little magazines" that come out of universities are erudite and literate to beat hell.)

Second, I must rise to defense of the Bugle. As Pat implies, it really ain't fair to compare it and The T.T. The BCA covers 85 model years and has some 7,000 members, which makes it far more difficult to hit on something any given member thinks is interesting or useful. If I had 7,000 readers I'd probably be more conventional, too. The Bugle editor is tryin' her best, and I think we will see continuing improvement there, especially if the Board can ever decide to change the odd-ball format.

Third, I admit Pat has one "gotcha" on the "P" word. Just after Issue 2 went out, I was leafing through it -- that's when I do my final proofreading, after I mail it -- and I thought: "Oh, oh, someone's gonna nail me on this." My only defense is that I was alluding to John Steed's article, which uniformly employed the "P" word -- so I was being consistent with that. Weak, huh?

Last, to quote Pat, let us "get serious (more or less)." I have heard rumors that CCCA may include 80-series Buicks 1936-39 in its eligibility list in the future -- at least there seems to have been some agitation along such lines. It seems appropriate enough to me. The only significant differences between, say, a '37 Limited and a '37 Roadmaster are: (1) the Limited is about seven inches longer; (2) two Limited models (90 and 90-L) have jump seats, which no Roadmaster has; (3) the Limited has bigger brake drums, larger tires, a different axle ratio, and a few other mechanical consequences of its greater weight; and (4) the Limited fabrics may be a bit lusher. Do these separate a sheep from a goat? In particular, does seven inches a "classic" make? Surely, not in this context.

If a Limited is "classic," I see no valid reason why a Roadmaster is not likewise. If any Wills Sainte Claire, any Stearns-Knight, is "classic," if a 1932 Nash Ambassador, a Kissel White Eagle is "classic," then I submit a '37 or '38 Roadmaster is equally "classic." Roamers and Reveres I pass without comment, as well as A.C.'s and Squires (the latter, if I recall right, is one of those little two-seaters). Mind you, I do not disparage those marques: they are fine automobiles. Indeed, they seem to have a cachet -- in the eyes of the CCCA, at least -- that a mere Buick does not.

So, Roadmaster owners, shall we all hang on tenterhooks? Shall we humbly beseech the Grand Vizier of the CCCA to consider our case? Shall we file a Petition with the Vizier so persuasive no sane man could fail to be moved, and grant it? I, for one, suggest we save our time and our breath. Let CCCA go its way; I will go mine. The truth is: even if we were admitted, we'd be second or third-class citizens for many years, if not for all time. The Buick Limited is a second-class citizen in CCCA right

now, if reports from owners thereof may be believed. In particular, one of our '38 Limited owners told me that he took his car -- a very nice one -- to a CCCA meet last summer and got the cold shoulder; the Packard and Pierce owners distributed the prizes among themselves, as usual. So my informant -- owner also, I believe, of a few other listed "classics" -- said he was finished with CCCA shows, and they could all take a long trip to the headwaters of Fecal Creek. I agree.

Let the moguls of the CCCA assume so haughty and lofty a bearing as they may.

"He that is proud eats up himself."*

We shall wait for the nabobs of the CCCA to devour themselves, whereupon we shall grab their cars.

1937 Buick literature

WHAT THE STYLISTS *Saw and Said*

YOU can buy testimonials from some people. You can induce friends to say a good word. But when you ask America's foremost style setters what they think of your new car you're as apt to get a "thumbs down" as you are a pat on the back.

Nevertheless, we wanted to double-check our own opinion of the new 1937 Buick. So we decided to submit it, in full-size model form, to the acid criticism of this independent, free-thinking, outspoken group.

The list of those who flew to Flint at our invitation in a specially chartered plane on August 12th reads like a *Who's Who* of America's number-one experts in style, design, and engineering.

There were editors from the world's two largest style magazines and New York's favorite newspaper fashion page: Margaret Case, of *Vogue;* Peggy Le Boutillier, of *Harper's Bazaar;* Fanny Fern Fitzwater, of *The New York Herald Tribune.*

Eileen Tighe, member of the internationally famous interior decorating firm of Elsie DeWolfe, Inc., came and compared notes with Virginia Hamill, renowned consultant on decoration and design.

Harvey Wiley Corbett, president of the National Alliance of Art and Industry, gave most of his attention to the new Buick's contour; while Walter E. Brainard, merchandising head of W. & J. Sloane, America's leading home furnishers, examined the upholstery and interior comforts.

Andrew Goodman, of Bergdorf-Goodman, Fifth Avenue's famous couturiers, discussed the colors, styling, and appointments with the prominent illustrator, Russell Patterson.

Herbert Chase, pre-eminent consulting engineer of world-wide fame, spent most of his preview time inspecting the construction features with C. A. Chayne, Buick's chief engineer.

During the day, this celebrated galaxy of critics examined the new 1937 Buick as no new automobile has ever been examined before. They inspected the plant where it was soon to be produced. They even drove one Buick which, for secrecy's sake, hid the new 1937 chassis and engine under a last year's body.

Then came their verdict. It was not onl unanimously favorable but enthusiasticall so, as you can see from the following typic comments that this authoritative group previewers volunteered.

"I was particularly impressed by the illusio of speed in the new Buick for 1937, even whe it is only standing motionless in the displa room. And no less extraordinary was its actu speed, for although I drove the new engine ov sixty the car skimmed along so surely, smoothl and silently I didn't realize the truth until looked at the speedometer. It's lucky the brak are as marvelous as they are! I certainly co gratulate you on the body colors, especiall Chancellor, your new midnight blue. It has gre chic and character. But I also like that deceptiv sand color that you sell to the dusty states. It really camouflage and very smart."

—PEGGY LE BOUTILLIER,
Harper's Bazaar

"My impression of the new Buick's smart ness in appearance and appointments wa most favorable. What's more, judging from th fine performance of the car in the short ride took and in what I learned of the numerous re finements which have been made, there is n doubt in my mind that the new Buicks full meet the progressive engineering standard which you at Buick are out to set."

—HERBERT CHASE, M. E.

"May I rave a little about the new Buicks! They most certainly appealed to me, from both the fashion and the feminine angle. The new silhouette is so designed and modeled that even when the car is standing still it gives the idea o

*Troilus and Cressida; Act II, sc. 3.

speed. The interiors give you such a sense of luxurious space. In fact, the whole job is a revelation in completeness, grace, comfort, and distinction."

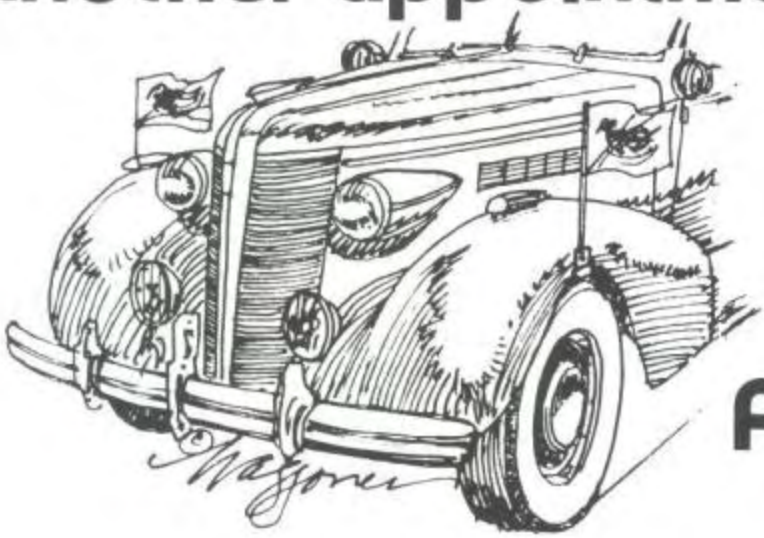
—FANNY FERN FITZWATER,
Fashion Director,
The New York Herald Tribune

"I was glad to see that the Buick Motor Company is giving such careful consideration to a definite improvement in line and proportion. It is very evident that the changes in decorative design are the direct outgrowth of good, careful study of function. The 1937 Buick has made, what appears to me, to be remarkable progress—a very forward step—and I extend my hearty congratulations to your engineers and designers."

—HARVEY WILEY CORBETT,
President of the National Alliance of Art and Industry

The foregoing is an excerpt from The Buick Magazine of October 1936 -- the issue featuring the introduction of the 1937 models. You will note that, prior to public display of the new models, Buick did an elaborate "sneak preview," complete with chartered aircraft (a DC-3? Maybe a Tri-motor?) from New York to Flint, for "America's foremost style-setters." A few things struck me in reading the quotes. Two people mentioned the "illusion of speed," which was of course a desideratum in that era of "streamline style." The Harper's Bazaar lady thought "Chancellor Blue" -- my own color -- had "great chic and character." More interesting, however, is her comment about the "sand color you sell to the dusty states." This must refer to that odd-ball 1937-only hue, Samarra Beige, which looks to me like nothing so much as World War II desert camouflage. It seems reasonably clear that cars shipped to certain western states -- probably the Southwest and the Great Plains at least -- were routinely equipped with oil-bath air cleaners, but this is the only indication I have seen that colors as well as equipment were considered in regional distribution. It makes some sense. Fifty years ago, few roads in the interior West were paved, and passage through semi-arid country would have raised a lot of dust. A black car would have looked horrible in minutes, whereas Samarra Beige would at least have retained some dignity.

another appointment in samarra:



Al HOON and his FAY-A-TOON

Another incredible footnote to history has been revealed to us through the pages of that most obscure and trivial of special interest publications, The Journal of Obscure and Trivial Events (JOOTE), and the supernatural powers of NIKKO the Oriental Pen. Many of you will recall that the story of Baron Manfred von Vielfrass and "Das Buick-mit-Beiwagen" came to us in the same way. San Francisco Artist Dug Waggoner, our Club's answer to Michaelangelo, Botticelli and Jackson Pollock, is (among other things) a member of The Society for the Preservation of Crap Absolutely No One Cares About, known fondly to its adherents as SPOCA-NOCA. This organization, in conjunction with another group called APOS (Association for the Perpetuation of Odd Shit) publishes the learned journal referred to above. Outside California, of course, these groups would be considered Weird Cults.

To the uninitiated, NIKKO would appear just another one of the tools of Dug's trade, a Japanese drawing pen. However, as in the Orient Lamont Cranston learned the power to cloud men's minds, so in the Orient was NIKKO infused with a mysterious power to draw without human intervention. Almost invariably, such drawings reveal historical events long shrouded by the mists of time. (I say "almost invariably" because now and then NIKKO draws naked women, but after all, he's only human.) Thus, NIKKO has previously illustrated for us precious vignettes of history: "Das Buick-mit-Beiwagen," the German General Staff's wine-tasting car (Vol. VI, No. 5); the ill-starred 1938 Century 69-SSK (Vol. V, No. 2); and Dave Lewis' swap meet truck (Vol. IV, No. 4). To name just a few.

Against this background, I bring you Dug's latest report of his gleanings from the pages of JOOTE.

* * * * *

On the Edge of the Great Syrian Desert, in the year 1937, was the camp of Al Hoon-ben-Sisal, great-grandson of the last Caliph of Baghdad. Since the formation of Iraq after the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, Al Hoon had lived in relative obscurity with his followers. Although not in particularly straitened circumstances, he managed to extract tribute from all those who entered his domain, be they Christian, Moslem

or Jew. Among the tributes recently extracted at that time was a Buick Century convertible sedan (called in Persian a "Fay-a-Toon") which had been obtained, complete with a small trailer, from an American archaeology expedition. Al Hoon was quite pleased with his car, especially because its color — a sort of olive-greenish-grayish-tannish — blended well with the terrain and thus offered camouflage for his tribute-gathering forays.

Fueling and lubricating the Fay-a-Toon was, however, a distinct problem. Al Hoon found that he must send emissaries to Baghdad to purchase drums of gasoline and oil, at a heavy price in gold or concubines, or both. Al Hoon was not accustomed to purchasing anything, much less goods of so dear a tariff. He therefore consulted his Seer, Adobe-al-Hibban-ben-Ribban ("He of the Crossed Eyes").

"Oh Mighty Prince," said Adobe, "I believe the Anglos make those liquids from greasy black matter that comes out of the earth. They call it O-Yul."

"And where does this black matter come from the earth, Wise One?"

"A thousand apologies, Oh Mighty One, but I know not."

"Well, you had better find out by sundown, Cross-Eyes, or you will be as a shriveled grape, a dried camel turd."

Adobe went into the desert to pray for enlightenment. After some time prostrate upon his rug, Adobe looked up to see a plume of dust, which drew ever closer. "Allah be praised," he said, "a sign." The sign soon materialized into two red GMC trucks bearing white stars and four men in olive-green jump suits. The trucks halted and one man got out.

"Jones, Smith, Figbee and Newton," the man said in Turkish, albeit with a strange twang, "from The Texas Company Geology Department. Old man, have you heard of the Sinks of Phwataar?"

Fortunately, Adobe could speak Turkish. "I have, Oh Mighty Texas-men, but why do you care? The Sinks are many hours ride by camel, in the Desolate Regions."

"Never mind, white-beard. Just show us the way, and riches may follow."

What, thought Adobe, have I got to lose? He gathered up his rug and rolled his eyes heavenward. "Allah be merciful" he said, and sprang into the lead truck. "Proceed with haste to the northwest, oh Texas-men, and we shall enter the Desolate Regions."

An hour later they found themselves in a narrow defile where the ground fell away into numerous holes and caverns. "This is the Sinks of Phwataar," Adobe said, "so named because the Sultan of Phwataar, so 'tis told, and all his men, slipped on greasy black matter here, and sunk from sight into the caverns"

A light went on in the old man's brain. Greasy black matter? Texas-men? Americans? O-Yul! He unrolled his rug and fell upon it, crying out: "Allah is merciful, Allah is bountiful."

At about the same time, Figbee and Newton were hollering (not in Turkish) "Hot dawg! Whoopee! Ho-lee-shee-uht! It's the ree-uhl stuff!"

Prostrate upon his rug, Adobe felt a boot in his butt. "Haul up, white-beard, who controls this region?"

"The Mighty Prince Al Hoon-ben-Sisal, oh brilliant Texas-men; he extracts tribute from all who venture here."

"He'll have tribute comin' out his ears before we're done, white-beard. Roll your rug, we're gonna haul butt for his camp." Figbee and Newton quickly filled a drum with the black greasy matter, and the red trucks sped southeast. The red sun was nearing the western horizon when Adobe entered the princely tent, his face split by a -you-know-what grin.

The camel-fat lamps burned late that night in Al Hoon's tent as he palavered with the Texas-men. Accustomed, as we have seen, to getting the better part of any deal, Al Hoon found the Americans too obdurate for his taste. He took Adobe aside. "Why don't we just cut off their heads?"

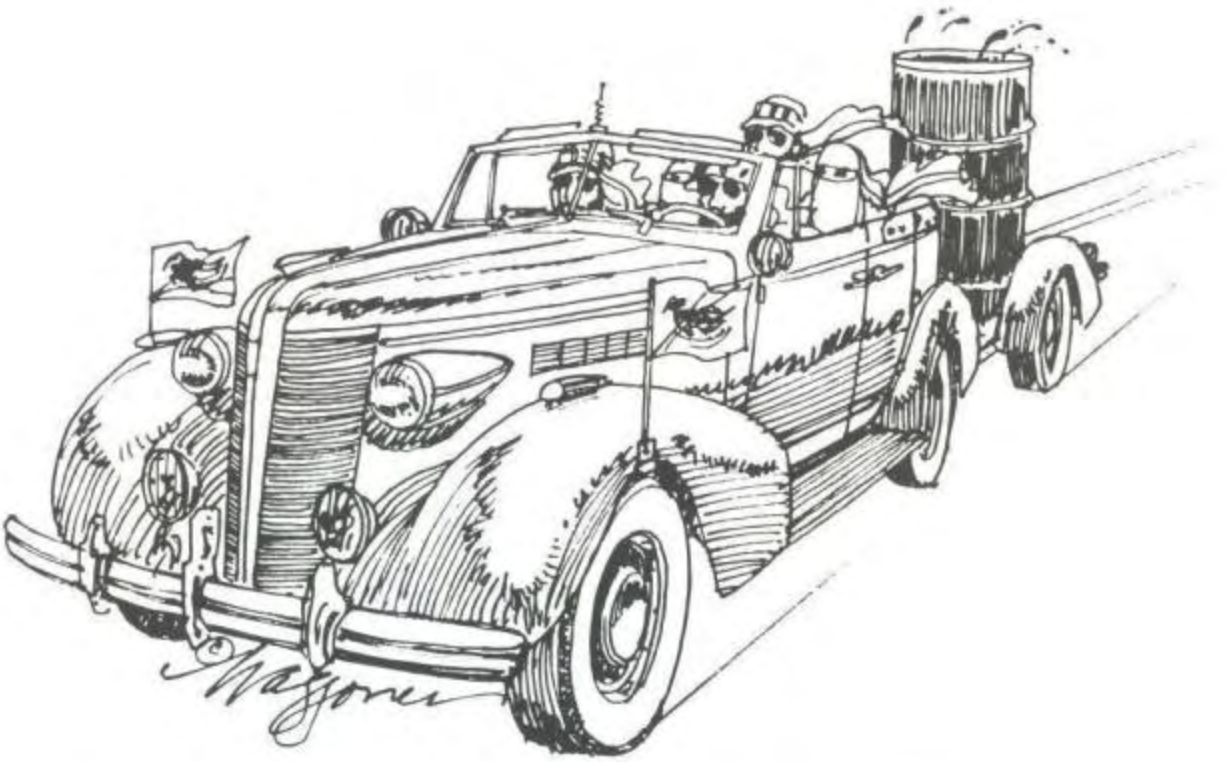
Adobe was still flushed with success, and dared suggest the prince was not making sense. "The Americans will pump it, pipe it and make it into the precious liquids. We need only sit and watch, and collect one third of the riches. You will be rich enough to have an army of Fay-a-Toons. You can use them to harass the Sultan of Frisbee and the Prince of Quatrain, your old enemies. Besides, the Texas-men were sent to us through the Mercies and Bounties of Allah, and we must be grateful. Mighty is thy hand, oh Prince, but not thy brain. Do the deal."

"You speak wisely, Wise Man," said Al Hoon, secretly relishing the prospect of chasing the Sultan of Frisbee's camels and the Prince of Quatrain's concubines with his Fay-a-Toon squadrons. "We will do it." He returned to the Texas-men. "You got a deal, dudes, let's have a plate of sheep eyes."

The following day, a small convoy set out from Al Hoon's camp for the Texas Company's office in Samarra. Flanked by the red trucks was Al Hoon's Buick and its trailer; the prince insisted on placing the barrel of "O-yul" on the trailer and pulling it himself.

The rest, as they say, is history. The descendants of Al Hoon today enjoy fabulous wealth. The first Buick Fay-a-Toon has been carefully preserved as a Royal Venerated Object, the source of this good fortune. Each year, on the anniversary of the great bounty's discovery at the Sinks of Phwataar, Al Hoon's grandson drives the Buick from the Edge of the Desert to his Appointment in Samarra, towing a barrel of the best Arabian Light Crude. Allah is indeed Bounteous.

> Whosoever flieth from his country for the sake of God's true religion, shall find in the earth...plenty of provisions.
>
> ...The Koran, Chap. 4



After reading that Incredible Tale, Dug slyly left the pages open on his drawing board with NIKKO, uncapped, and a fresh sheet of rice paper. That night, a full moon fell into the Pacific as the surf crashed on Seal Rocks, and moonbeams threw an eerie glow through the gloom in Muir Woods. The next morning Dug found the picture we see here.

TECHNICAL TIPS

VALVE COVER RESTORATION

Article and Photo by Paul B. Culp, Jr.
(With substantial additions by the Editor)

For about 15 years replacement lettering for valve covers (or, more precisely, rocker arm covers) has been available to Buick restorers. I'm not sure who was responsible for the first copy, but without doubt it is a fine piece of art work. The new lettering may be purchased from Club member, Del Carpenter (6070 Ten Mile Road, N.E., Rockford, MI 49341, (616) 866-9920), from Bob's Automobilia, Kanter, and other suppliers. The lettering is not a "decal" in the traditional sense--that is, a film that is removed from paper backing by soaking in water and then slid onto the surface; rather, the letters are on a transparent, self-adhesive film that is peeled off its backing and then applied.

While my engine block was being rebored, I had the other engine components cleaned and sandblasted. The valve cover had its original lettering fairly well intact, but the color was faded and the cover was pitted with numerous rust spots. So I decided it must lose its "original condition" identity. After sandblasting, the pitted areas and a few dents were filled with a high-quality, metal-filled body plastic. Then sanding, primer, and sanding again. It's better not to use a bead blaster on parts such as this that need a tough high-quality paint finish. Sandblasting gives a much better "tooth" for the adherence of the primer. Obviously, you should use a sandable primer. The "sandable" auto primer in aerosol cans is not, in fact, very sandable, but one can get by with it. Prior to applying the primer, a solvent should be used to remove dirt, fingerprints, etc. This kind of attention to detail in painting separates the excellent result from the "amateur restoration" result.

The primed cover was sprayed with Bill Hirsch "Engine Green." This is a good high-temperature engine enamel, but must be applied correctly to get good results. For spraying, I reduced it with about 70% enamel reducer. The product can be brushed but, even then, should be thinned and used only on small areas: it skins over very quickly and is not self-leveling to anything like the extent varnish or ordinary enamels are. Brushing is more successful on rough castings, e.g., a water pump. Automotive enamel reducer must be used as a thinner for the Hirsch paint: don't try something you bought at the lumber yard. You can also use DuPont Imron, mixed according to the Club's formula (available from the Editor). Just make sure you use the same paint over the whole engine.

After a few days of paint curing, I cleaned the valve cover with "Pre-Klean" (a surface preparer) and located the lettering transfer on the cover with a reference mark. Before the backing was removed, I trimmed the circumference so that there would be an uncontaminated edge. This is

important: from shipping and handling, the edges and corners become tattered and these will show up as a ragged "no-stick" area. The transfer backing was then peeled off and the lettering film pressed into place with a rubber sanding block. If the transparent areas of the transfer are stuck tight to the metal, they will be invisible. However, if air pockets develop they will show up as milky translucent spots. These can frequently be remedied by pricking with a pin or slitting with a sharp knife or razor blade and then pressing down again. Now you can see why a hard, smooth, clean paint surface is necessary here. It is not a bad idea, when ordering these transfers, to buy two. If you make a bad mistake with the first, you can start over right away.

This is a small job in the context of restoring a whole engine, but it illustrates how attention to detail pays off. A nice job here will make a good impression when the hood is opened: a mediocre one will detract noticeably from otherwise good work.

One final note: 1937 and 1938 valve cover letterings differ (as does 1939 from 1938). Make sure you get the right one, and make sure you put the lettering on the right-hand side of the cover.

Buick QUESTIONS Buick

QUESTION: After reading many questions and your excellent responses over the past two years, I have decided to ask for some help of my own. I have a '37 Century. The starter often just grinds before engaging. I found that a piece of the bell housing had broken off and fallen into the housing. This may or may not have caused the problem, but in any event, the flywheel teeth are worn in the front where the starter drive pinion meshes with them. Also, the pinion teeth are tapered off on the end. Are these supposed to look that way or is the pinion machined to a straight edge all the way across? Is this a common problem? I have enclosed some sketches.

ANSWER: It is a common problem. The fix depends upon the severity of the wear. In your case, the piece of bell housing rattling around inside may have contributed, but the condition you describe can be found in all cars after thousands of starts. First, the starter drive. The pinion, or drive gear, teeth are tapered off a bit at the end; they are not machined off straight. Since starters have changed very little over the past 50 years, you can look at a new one at any auto parts dealer and get a pretty good idea of what they are supposed to look like. The rounding-off or taper enables the drive gear teeth to slide into mesh with the flywheel ring gear. If these teeth are irregularly chewed up or "milled", the "Bendix-drive" (consisting of gear, overrunning clutch, spring, drive flange or collar, and shaft) should be replaced. New drives that will fit are generally easy to find at auto electric repair and supply firms; just take in your old one. Do not monkey with it; the whole Bendix-drive should be replaced as a unit. The amount of lateral pinion travel in and out may be adjusted by screwing in or out the stud on the solenoid. (See '37 Shop Manual, pages 7-8 of Section 12).

Next, the flywheel. Your sketch indicated that as much as half the width of each ring gear tooth may be eroded or worn away. When things have gotten this bad, it is best, in my opinion, to look for a flywheel and ring gear (or gear alone) in better shape. Where the ring gear is only moderately worn, it may be turned. The gear is a separate part, and is a shrink-fit around the outer diameter of the wheel. That is, the inner diameter of the ring is a hair smaller than the outer diameter of the flywheel. The ring is heated until it expands sufficiently to be pressed over the wheel; when things cool down, the ring contracts and grips the outer diameter of the wheel. The ring may be removed in the same way: i.e. heat it up and press or knock it off. This is not a job for the propane torch you use for sweat-soldered plumbing; something more powerful will do it much better, and a flared tip on the torch is needed to apply heat to as wide an area as possible. Once the ring has expanded enough to be removed (some hammering may be needed), it can be turned, so the unworn side faces front, and put back on the wheel. This is a two-man job calling for tongs and leather gloves. Having the "good" side of the ring gear to the front will result in better, more positive meshing, no grinding, and less wear on the drive pinion.

Two things may be done to reduce wear on the starter and ring gear: both are intended to get the engine running more quickly. First, install an electric fuel pump to use as a booster for starts (see Vol. V, No. 9). Second, the starter may be modified with "high-torque" windings. Two people I know who can do this modification:

Ron Lekse
RBR Electronics
460 E. 319 St.
Willowick, OH 44094
216/585-7178

Floyd Leach
Floyd's Rebuilding
P. O. Box 93
Newport, MI 48166
313/586-2739

SHOP MANUAL, 1937

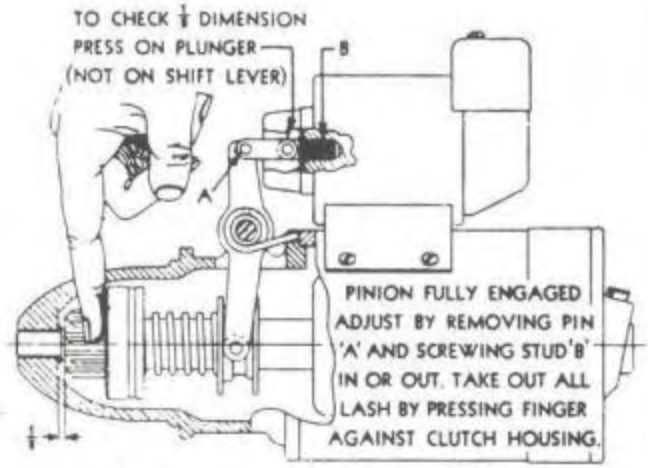


Fig. 12-6. Adjusting Pinion Travel

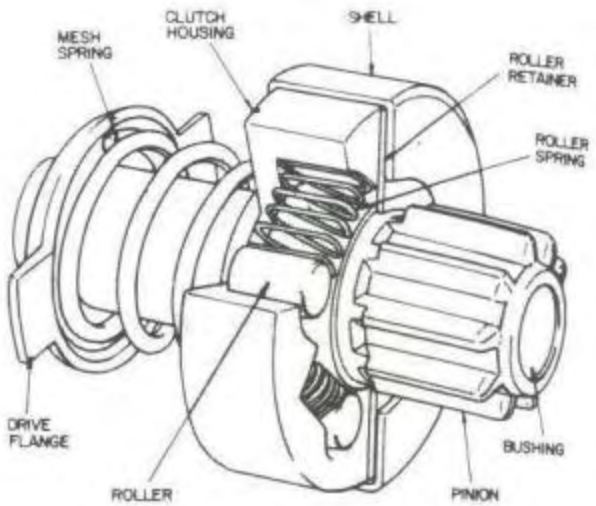


Figure 25 Cross-sectional view of a typical overrunning clutch

While we are on this subject, it might be interesting to spend a few minutes on the theory of starter (or "Bendix") drives. We must begin with the solenoid. It's enough for present purposes to say that this consists of an iron plunger inside two coils of wire, plus a contact disc or plate. The windings are energized when the starter switch is activated: this creates an electromagnetic field which pulls the plunger into the solenoid. When this happens the contact disc makes the motor feed connection between the battery and the starter motor. Meanwhile, the motion of the plunger is being transferred to the drive pinion by the shift fork, which slides the drive along the armature shaft, in the opposite direction from the motion of the plunger. This brings the pinion into mesh with the flywheel ring gear a split second before the motor feed electrical connection is made. (It is essential that the pinion and the ring gear be in mesh before the starter motor begins to turn.) The torque of the motor is then transmitted to the flywheel. A moment's reflection will indicate that (1) the starter motor must develop considerable torque; and (2) in addition there must be — and is — a substantial gear reduction between the pinion and the ring gear in order to multiply the motor torque and keep the starter to a reasonably compact size. (On modern cars the reduction is generally between 15:1 and 20:1 — that is, if the pinion has 10 teeth the ring gear will have 150 to 200 teeth. I haven't counted teeth on pre-war Buicks but assume its something along those lines.) When the starter switch is de-activated (on both '37 and '38 this is done by intake manifold vacuum), the magnetic force holding the solenoid plunger inside the coil collapses, the spring on the Bendix drive pushes the shift fork back, which pulls the plunger and the contact disc out, which in turn cuts the elctrical connection to the motor and pulls the drive pinion back to its original position out of mesh with the ring gear.

So far rather simple, but there is one remaining problem. There is a certain time lag in all of this, and when the engine fires and starts transmitting its torque to the flywheel, the pinion may not be wholly out of mesh with the ring gear. If the engine

transmits its torque to the starter motor, through the big gear reduction mentioned above, the motor will suddenly be turning at 15 to 20 times its normal speed. This will cause the motor to fail in short order. To solve this problem, we have the overrunning clutch, an ingenious device which makes the solenoid-actuated starter drive practical. This is a roller-type clutch that transmits torque in only one direction, turning freely in the other. A typical overrunning clutch is shown in the illustration (from MOTOR Auto Engines & Electrical Systems, 8th Ed.). The clutch housing is internally splined to the motor armature shaft. The drive pinion turns freely on the shaft within the clutch housing. When the clutch housing is driven by the armature, the spring-loaded rollers are forced into the small ends of tapered slots and wedge tightly against the barrel to which the pinion is affixed, locking the pinion and clutch housing together. The motor torque is thus transmitted from the armature shaft to the housing to the pinion and finally to the flywheel. if the ring gear begins to drive the pinion, the clutch rollers will immediately be unloaded and released, permitting the pinion barrel to rotate freely around the shaft. Neat, huh?

Although it is generally not practical or prudent for the non-expert to attempt repair of Bendix-drives, it is, I think, useful to know the general theory of how they work. How many of you did? The truth is: I didn't til I looked it up. Almost every time I write one of these articles, I learn something, which is one of the chief rewards of editor-ship. Ask more questions and we'll all learn more.

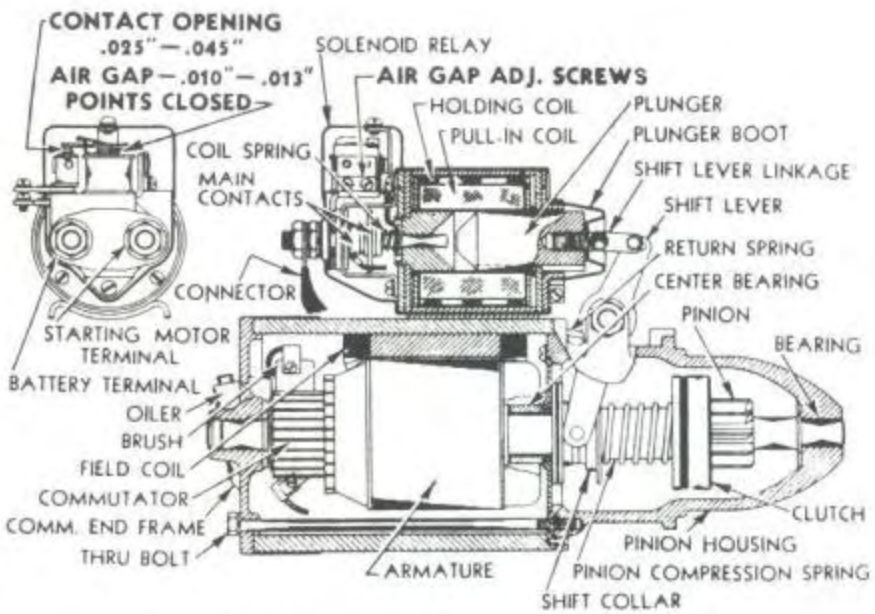


Fig. 12-5. Starting Motor—Series 60-80-90

SHOP MANUAL,

1937

Engine Rebuilding - Part 7: Pistons

By PAUL B. CULP, Jr.

Over a half century ago in the garage of a Buick dealership, an engine was being overhauled. However, the mechanic doing the rebuilding work was not working to the Buick time clock but rather on his own time and his own car. His Buick had to be better! (Yes, when better automobiles are built, he would rebuild them.) And, in his zealousness to increase engine power, he raised the compression ratio. The cylinder head had been shaved a few times to achieve this end. Finally, slugs were fastened to the pistons. This attempt met with results. So much so that he showed the pistons to a Buick field man. This modification found its way to the design engineers at Flint. Thus, the evolution of the Turbulator piston. Not that the compression ratio was increased at the expense of pre-ignition: rather fuel combustion was more complete, resulting in increased power. As Buick Chief Engineer, Charley Chayne, once said, "Compression ratio doesn't mean a damned thing, it is what you get out of it." In 1938, Buick outdid its competition once again by getting out more power from the same displacement. The 1938 Buick Owner's Manual explains it this way: "The increase has been obtained solely as the result of a new piston known as the Buick Turbulator Piston. Increased compression makes for more efficient operation because the 'burning' spreads with greater rapidity throughout the combustion chamber. Simply increasing the compression would result in annoying detonation or 'spark rap.' In the 1938 Buick engine the shape of the piston head controls the burning of the fuel and eliminates the spark rap which would otherwise accompany the higher compression ratio. The modified dome shape of the piston causes the gases to 'whirl' at cyclone velocities and has much to do with this controlled burning." The beginning of the DYNAFLASH era!

Before we get to the actual work of replacing rings and pistons in this series of reports on my rebuilding operation, perhaps we should review a few basics of the power plant. Pistons are slightly smaller in diameter than the bore of the cylinder. This space between the cylinder wall and piston is most important. The clearance is necessary because the piston reaches a higher temperature than the cylinder walls, since the walls are cooled by the water surrounding them. This clearance is also necessary to provide a space for a film of lubricant between the piston and cylinder wall. The piston material determines the amount of clearance required in the bore, different metals having different rates of expansion and contraction when heated and cooled.

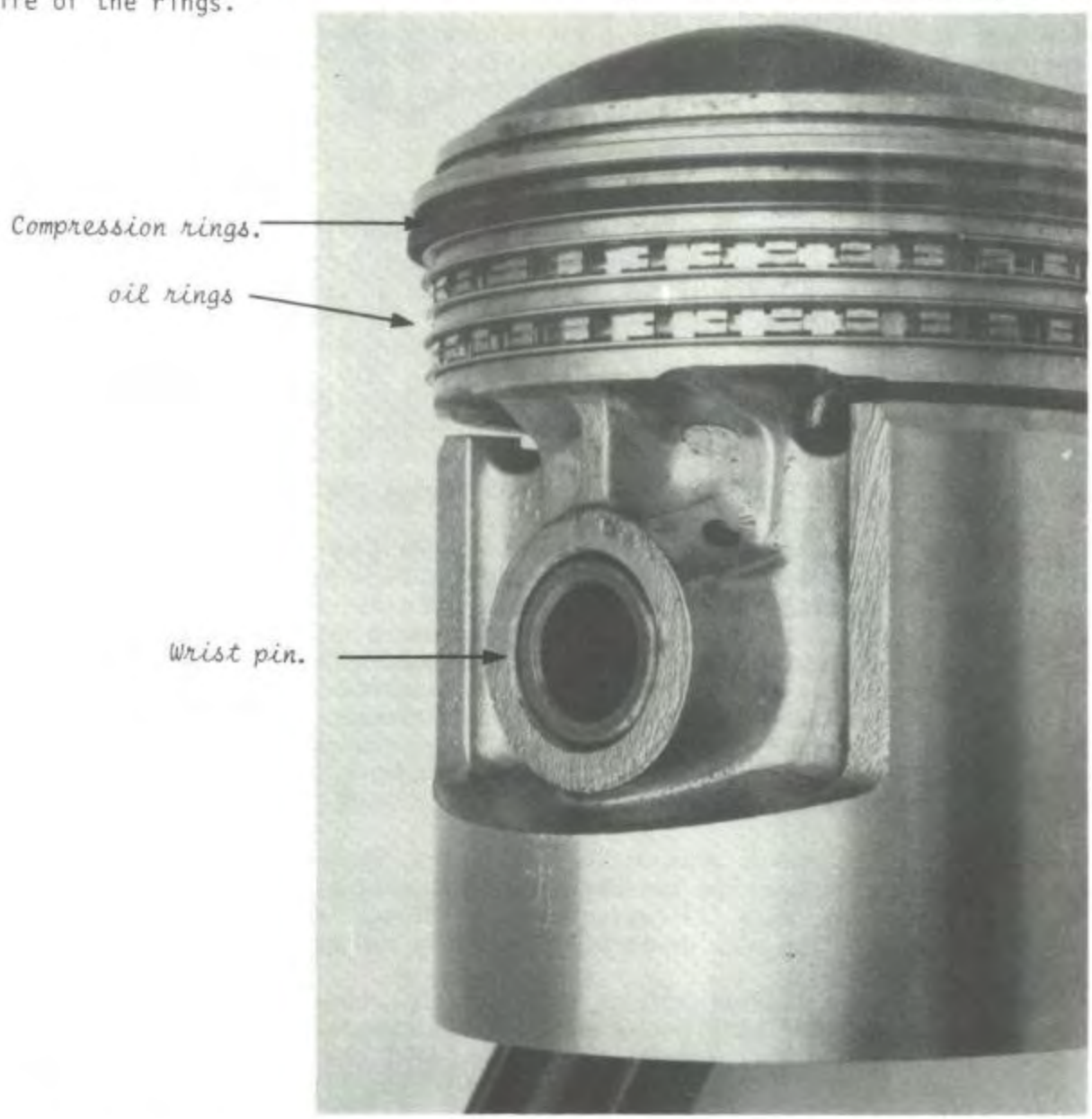
Our original Buick pistons are made of a heat-treated aluminum alloy, and were given an electrolytic treatment known as anodizing. (This very hard surface increases the diameter slightly, by about .0003 in. The anodized surface is also slightly porous so that it has excellent wearing qualities.)

Piston material may be from cast iron, cast steel, chrome-nickel steel, or aluminum alloy. The later piston material which is in 1937 and 1938 Buicks is lighter than iron or steel, and is an excellent conductor of heat. (Speaking of lighter, my grandfather's '31 Buick, Series 60, was given new life

when my father and uncle replaced its original cast-iron pistons with 1941 Buick pistons just after the war.) To compensate for variations of temperature, a horizontal slot between the ring belt and the skirt on the right or camshaft side was machined at manufacture.

At the same time, on the opposite side a T-slot was machined. In effect, the piston's shape changes during warm up. Buick cam-ground its piston to size, as is done with all modern pistons. The finished shape is slightly oval, but once hot, expansion plays its part and the piston becomes round.

The top of the piston is called the head; the part below the ring grooves is called the skirt. The latter is what is measured for wear and fitting the pistons to the bore. Just below the top is a small groove to minimize piston heat build-up. This "heat dam" keeps some of the heat from combustion in the piston dome and away from the compression ring. The effect is to increase the life of the rings.



Close-up of '38 large engine piston shows wedge (or dome) on top, four rings (two compression, two oil) and wrist pin installed.

There are four ring grooves on each piston (measurements are for 1938 engines):

1. Compression Ring 1/8" in size*
2. Compression Ring 3/32" in size
3. Oil Control Ring 3/16" in size
4. Lower Oil Control Ring 3/16" in size

*(1937 - this ring is 3/32.")

These two lower grooves are provided with 5/32" oil return holes. (Ten in the top groove and eight in the bottom.) Piston pins are clamped to the upper end of the connecting rod and float in the piston. Almost all pistons are pin fitted from the factory.

It is important to note that variations in after-market pistons require modification of the standard piston fitting procedure. (See the excerpt from Vol. III. No. 5)* The pistons on my '38 Century had to be replaced due to upper ring failure and self-destruction. The procedure is the same for any type of ring/piston inspection.

Remove the rings and clean the pistons thoroughly. See that all carbon is removed from the ring grooves. After the pistons have been cleaned thoroughly, they should be measured with a micrometer to determine their condition. Factory size is 3.437 (3.447 if on a "ten-over" engine: that is, .010 oversize at manufacture.) Not only do the pistons wear; they also collapse due to the slot in the skirt. Measurement should be made at right angles to the center of the piston pin or across the thrust surface of the skirt. Whenever the piston is worn to .003 less than original or basic

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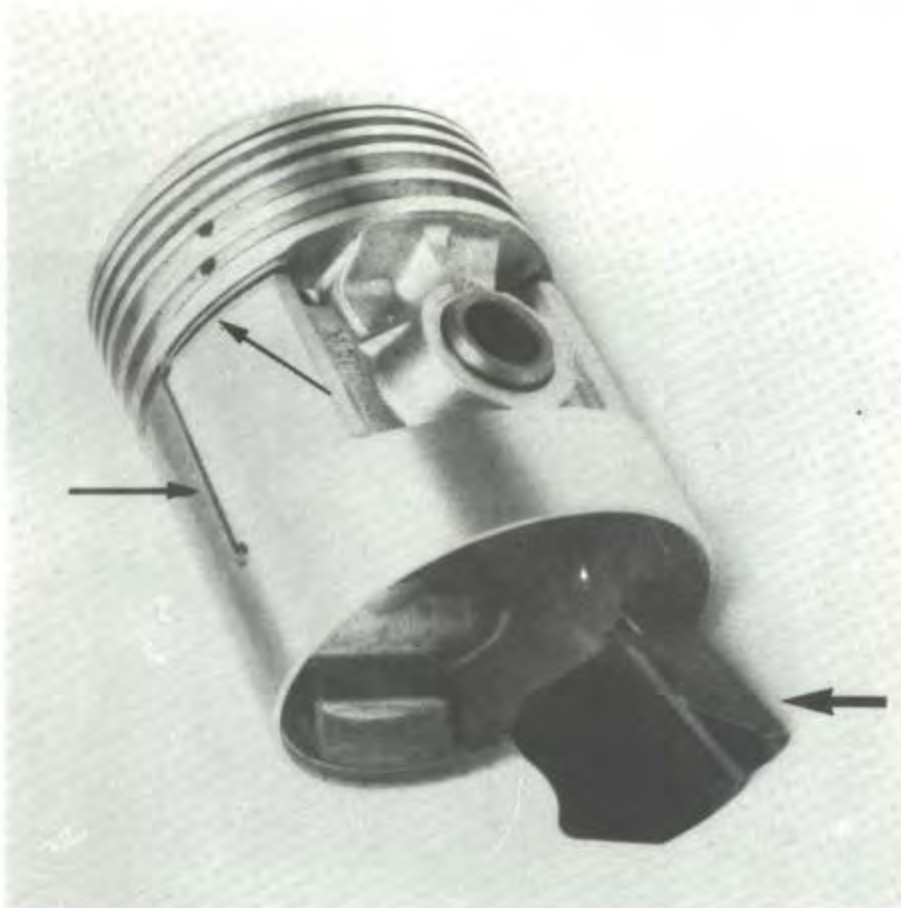
* *PISTON-CYLINDER CLEARANCE - From Bob Pipkin (#076),*

> *"One thing most machine shops do when they rebuild a Buick Stright-8 is set the pistons up too tight! One I'm working on now was bored .080" oversize and after-market pistons installed. Original Buick pistons were set up at the factory with .0008 to .0018 clearances. That works fine with the factory aluminum heat-treated-tinned piston. When after-market pistons are used clearances must be increased to prevent piston-cylinder scoring. I've had good results using .004 piston-cylinder clearances with all after-market pistons.*
>
> *So, if you do your engine and rebore, insist the machine shop open up the piston to cylinder wall clearance. By the way, this '37 engine had its '37 cylinder head and was fitted with domed pistons. This can be done!"*

According to some earlier advices from Bob, if you want to go to later "domed" pistons with the '37 head (which will raise compression ratio and improve power and efficiency with modern fuel), you MUST use a thick "sandwich" gasket and you MUST NOT use '38-'40 pistons. The '41-'49 pistons have a different shape: these are the ones to use. If you mill the '37 head, be very careful. You may also need to use '41-'48 push rods. Bob Pipkin knows as much (or more) about this as anybody I've ever heard of, so this is all very good, and very welcome, advice. Thanks, Bob.

diameter of the cylinder, use of an expander (metal spring clip), peening (knurling of skirts) or replacement is necessary. Buick marked its service pistons in colors to describe sizes. That is really academic in as much as most of today's available pistons are from after-market sources. Next, the cylinder block is measured to determine the amount of bore wear. The least wear is at the bottom whereas the most is at the middle to top section (ring travel area).



My original Buick pistons had expanders put in them in some prior rebuild. The horizontal and vertical slots (arrows) can be seen in this view.

The oversize piston alternative was the route I chose. (It was the most effective: Rebore and honing of all 8 cylinders was $125.00.) Because of a factory oversize engine (3.447) and the additional .030 wear, the diameter was now 3.477. A .050 oversize piston would have the bores at 3.487; this I decided was too little for a comfortable honing procedure. The result was an order to Northwestern Supply Store of Detroit, Michigan for .060 oversize large series pistons (3.497).

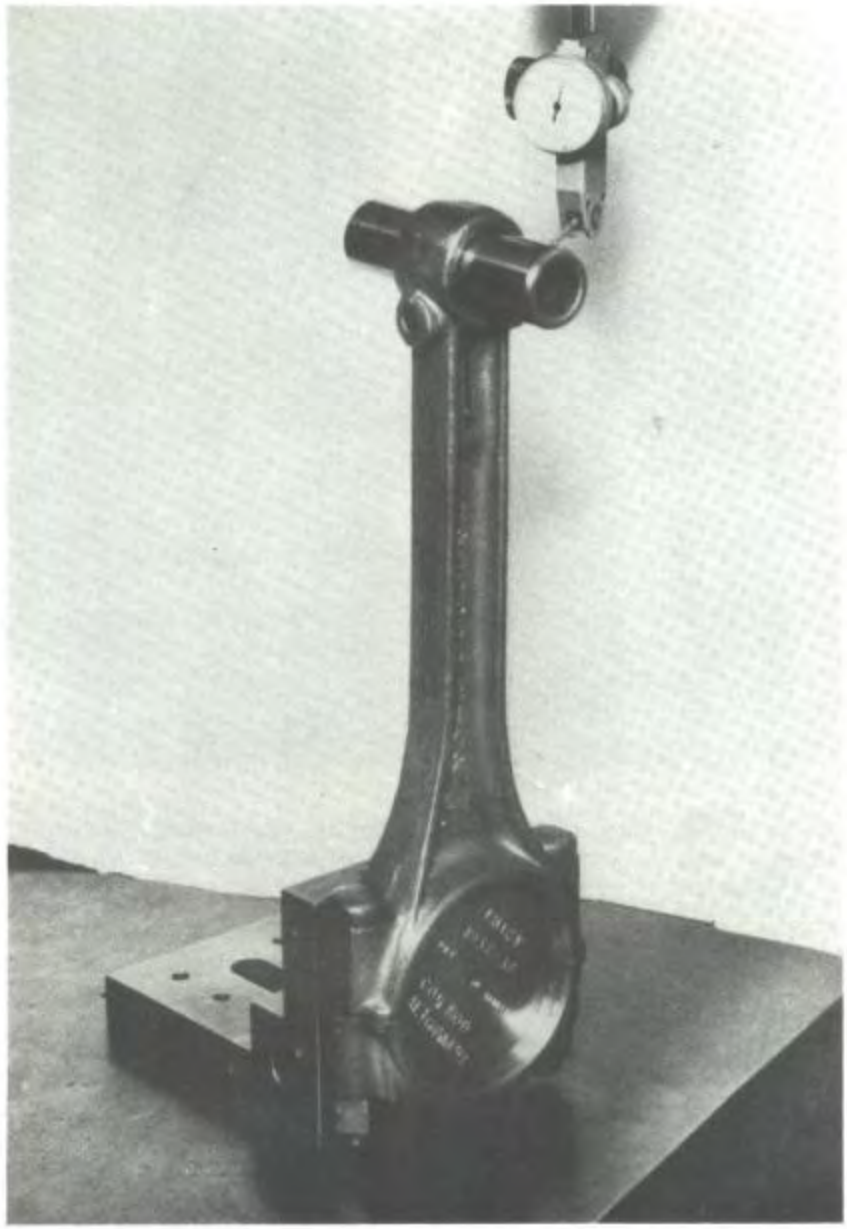
Once the pistons were delivered to my engine machine shop (ABC Automotive of Souderton, PA), work proceeded to fit the pistons to the bores, following specific instruction taken from The Torque Tube (Vol. III #5, P. 11).

It can be noted that these pistons were in their natural state: that is, non-anodized. Practically all new pistons come this way. I priced the anodizing treatment at $25.00 per piston and the metal plater could not assure me that the surface would endure. This was a commercial plater who was very

familiar with the process. His regular diet was anodizing for the Air and Space industry and occasional automotive work. This experience with piston coating convinced him that the consequences of failure far outweigh the wear benefits of anodizing.

The pistons were all numbered and balanced to each other. This required the removal of metal from inside the piston. Assembly proceeded as follows: First the pin was removed from the new piston. Then, the connecting rod was inserted in its proper location. (Oil hole is on the same side as spark plug--bolt is on the domed side of a '38 piston.) The small diameter of the rod was expanded by first removing the bolt. Then, a screw driver was installed in the slot while the rod was in a bench vice. A turning action expands the slot and the hole, thus permitting the wrist pin easy insertion. This position is evident from the location of the bolt clearance groove in the hollow piston pin. The clamp bolt was installed and torqued to 25-30 ft. lbs. Remember that

Taking bend out of connecting rod with arbor press, using an old air-cooled cyclinder as a support.

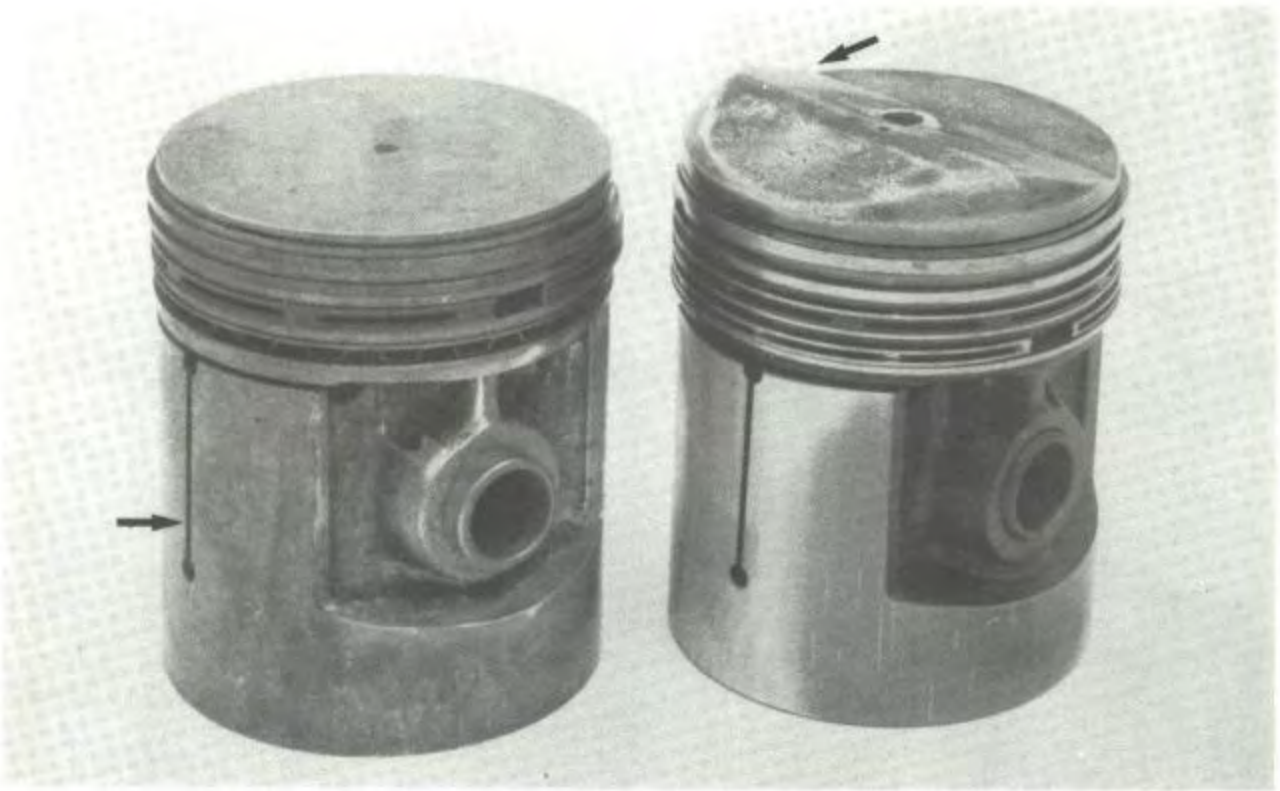


Using an alignment fixture

the pin floats in the piston. (Avoid tightening as this would cause the piston to bind.) At this stage the alignment of the rod can be checked. I made a fixture that fit the 'big end' of the 2.374 connecting rod. Once this was clamped and tightened I checked for parallelism: Piston over the center line of the connecting rod. Only one rod required a slight bend by employing an arbor press (machine shops do this also if asked).

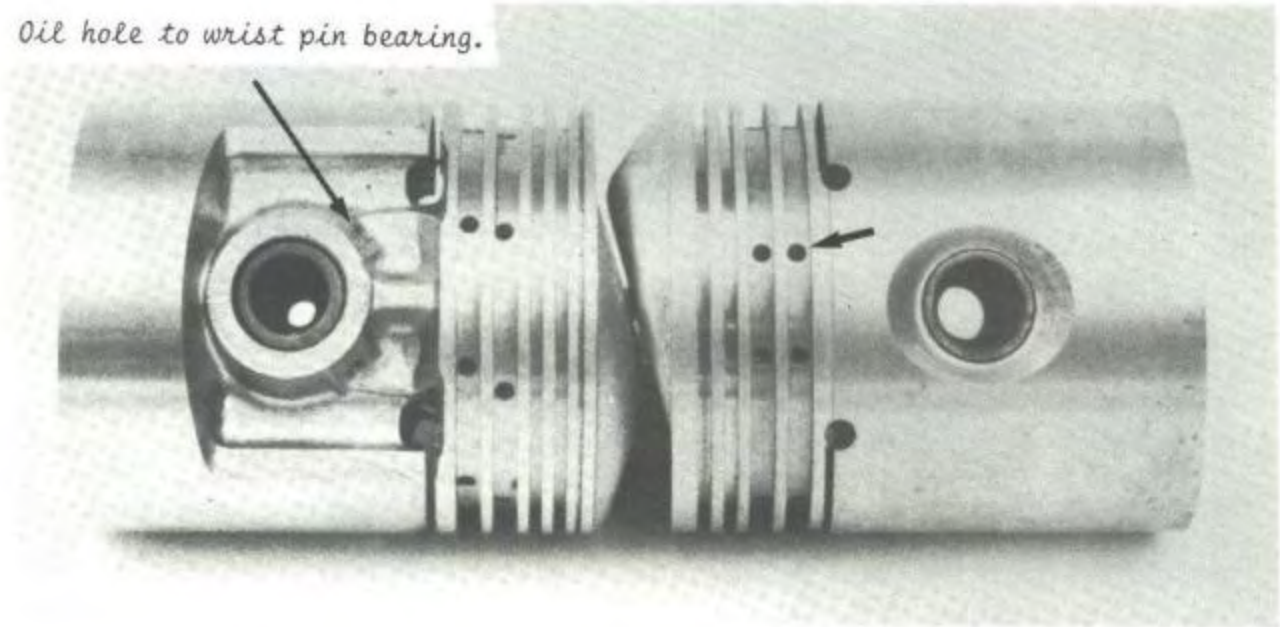
By using what I call the third hand method, I mounted and clamped the rod in a bench vise up close to the piston so that the rings could be installed on a fixed object. A variety of methods can be employed to install rings. These will be addressed in future articles, along with more specific information on ring functions, problems and solutions. We can't stop now!

(CONTINUED)

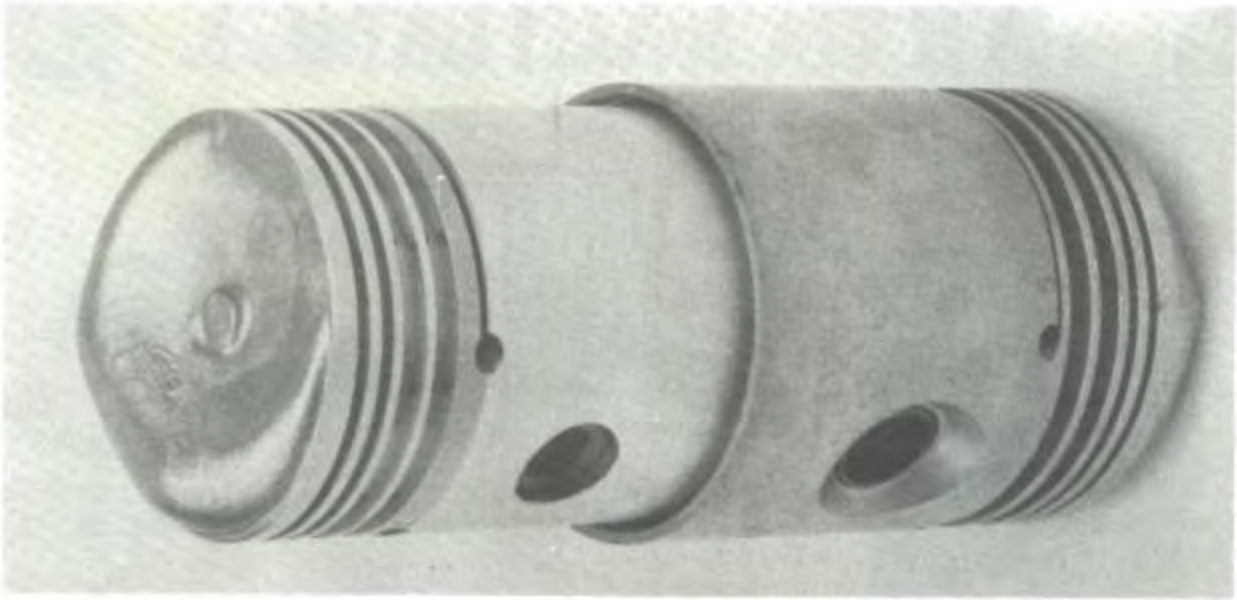


1937 original (on left) has flat top; compare with wedge top of 1938 original (on right). Rings are installed in this view, which also shows clearly the vertical slots.(⟶)

Oil hole to wrist pin bearing.



Original (left) and aftermarket 1938 pistons. The difference in configuration means a difference in expansion; thus the aftermarket piston must be fitted with more clearance. Note also different spacing of the oil ring holes.(⟵)



Large and small engine pistons together, showing difference in size. (These are 1941-style.)

CARS FOR SALE

- 1938 model 87 Roadmaster Streamline Sport Sedan. This is a very rare body style. Good solid car needing total restoration. Original engine will run. Single sidemount on driver's side--missing cover. Original radio. Chrome & stainless intact but off car. Body in primer. Window moldings woodgrained but not installed. Seats upholstered in wrong fabric. See TORQUE TUBE, Vol.V,No.5. $3500.

- 1937 model 46 business coupe. A good solid car that was poorly stored. Bad paint & chrome. Original interior. Runs, but has 1940s engine. One owner car--a little old lady. $3500.

MARIO E. BALLERINI (#97)
2027 South Hill St.
Oceanside, CA 92054

Phone days 9AM-4PM Pacific Time
619/433-5901

PARTS EXCHANGE

PARTS FOR SALE

FOR SALE: 1938 series 40--set of sidemount fenders, covers & hardware. Good condition. $750. JOHN JOHNSON (#697). 45 S.Lincoln Ave., Mundelein, IL 60060. 312/566-5005 or 312/223-2499.

FOR SALE: 40 series fuel pump-filter bowl on the side. This was given to me & I don't know if it works. Appears to have been rebuilt. Not AC. $20. BILL OLSON (#427). 842 Mission Hills Lane, Columbus, OH 43235. 614/436-7579; 614/687-3041.

FOR SALE: (This courtesy of David Bylsma #117) 1938 Special wiper vacuum motor-NOS. Will also fit Century by running rubber line from vacuum motor to tube from fuel pump. $45 plus $3 postage. Wayne Tyler-Rt.2, Box 1280, Montpelier, VA 23192.

1937 BUICK 4 DOOR SEDAN MODEL 41

L AND R FRONT FENDERS	50 EA
HOOD WITH SIDE PANELS	100
NOSE PIECE NO GRILL	40
REAR DECK LID	30
4 DOORS	25
TRANSMISSION	50
REAR END W SPRINGS ETC	150
FRONT SEAT	35
REAR SEAT	25
DASHBOARD	20
ENGINE BLOCK	60
ENGINE HEAD	55
COMPLETE FRONT END	50
F AND REAR BUMPERS	45
GARNISH MOULDINGS	8
RADIATOR	50
SS TRIMPIECES	45

1938 BUICK 4 DOOR SEDAN MODEL 41

L AND R FRONT FENDERS	20 EA
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REAR END W SPRINGS ETC	150
FRONT SEAT	45
REAR SEAT	35
DASH BOARD	30
COMPLETE FRONT END	50
GARNISH MOULDINGS	8
RADIATOR	50

JEFF MORRIS (#108). 5621 Farms Drive, Columbus, OH 43213
614/866-2302 home 614/299-1197 ofc.

Running boards, no rust out--$40 each. Outside & inside door handles--$7 each. '38 40-series left hood half--$30. '38 hood side panels (40)--$20 each. '38 nose section (40)--$45. '38 instrument cluster, no glass, temp. sender cut--$25. '38 40-series left front fender--$80. '38 60-series left front fender--$100. '38 80-series used axles, carrier--$40. '38 models 41, 48 61, 68 trunk lid--$80. All prices plus shipping. SASE or phone days 9AM - 4PM Pacific Time: 619/433-5901. MARIO BALLERINI (#97) 2027 South Hill St., Oceanside, CA 92054.

PARTS WANTED

WANTED: For 1938 model 46-C. Front license bracket; steering wheel; Buick heater & defroster; rumble seat lower step pad & bracket; valve cover. NOS or excellent for the following: stainless moldings: hood center, nose, running boards; horn ring & center emblem. JOHN Johnson (#697). 45 S.Lincoln Ave., Mundelein, IL 60060. 312/566-5005 or 312/223-2499.

WANTED: 1937 Stromberg AA-2 carb & large engine air cleaner. PRESTON K. TURNER (#718). 514 E. Main St., Washington, NC 27889 . 919/946-6651.

WANTED: For 1938 40-series. Spark plug cover; both tail light assemblies including lenses. LEROY D. COLE (#716). 9500 Gale Lake Dr., Box 183, Goodrich, MI 48438. 313/636-7221.

WANTED: '37 80-series running boards.
TOM ALDERINK (#735). 619 W.23 St., Holland, MI 49423.
616/392-1761

WANTED: '38 40-series sidemount cover, right side.
JOE LACKEY (#721). Rt.1, Box 50, Winchester, IN 47394.
317/468-7364

WANTED: 1937 large engine flywheel with ring gear in good shape (Part # 1292796) or ring gear alone (Part # 1286787). VINCE RICOTTA (#632). 105 Nokomis Parkway, Cheektowaga, NY 14225. 716/626-5002.

WANTED: 1937 Century--3.9 ring & pinion; four 15" wheels; front & rear bumper guards; gas tank; transmission cross-member & mount; Century emblem for hood sides. ALLEN D. ANDERSON (# 723). 780 Lakeview Drive, Lakewood, NJ 08701. 201/370-1422.

ATTENTION! WILL THE MEMBER WHO SENT IN A WANTED AD FOR A 38 CENTURY U-JOINT AND A FOR SALE AD FOR VARIOUS SMALL PARTS WITHOUT HIS NAME ON THE AD PLEASE RE-SUBMIT THE AD WITH HIS NAME & ADDRESS ON THE AD. ON THE ENVELOPE IS NOT GOOD ENOUGH. I THROW THEM OUT RIGHT AWAY.

If it's a '38 convertible, We're ready to help...

Engine Supports

❑Pad, front engine support. Replaces #1271631. Most models. Upper only 2/car
B-0229 . . . . . $19.50/pr.

❑Pad, engine support, front, lower, as required. Revulcanization service only for #1295255 & #1305582. Send in your old cores and allow 3 weeks. All models, lower.
B-0234 . . . . . $56.50/pr.

❑Support assembly, engine, rear. Replaces #1297662. Revulcanized to new condition using your old steel plates. Please send both steel plates from your old supports (4 pieces total). Allow 3 wks. for delivery. Series 40 only.
B-0235 . . . . . $93.00/pr.

❑Support, engine, rear. Revulcanizing service. Replaces #1297962. Your original steel parts cleaned, blasted, and remolded to new rubber. Be sure to send in both parts of each mount. Allow 3 weeks for this job. Series 80 and 90.
B-0256 . . . . . $93.00/pr.

❑Insulator/support, engine, rear at bell housing. Replaces #1297663. New rubber vulcanized to your old steel core. Send in cores and allow 3 weeks. All Series 60.
B-0289 . . . . . $93.00/pr.

Electrical, Exc. Lighting

❑Rubber boot, starter solenoid. Replaces #1853345, #1853346, #1884732 and #1884736. Perfect copy of original.
C-0371 . . . . . $9.50/ea.

❑End loop, radio antenna. Cord reinforced rubber with metal grommet per original. Mounted on runningboard on some models.
C-0105 . . . . . $12.75/ea.

❑Boot, runningboard antenna wire connection. Some models as required.
C-0212 . . . . . $10.75/ea.

❑Separator, horn contact. For standard or non-flexible wheel. Replaces #264584. Series 40
B-0409 . . . . . $13.50/ea.

❑Rubber boot, battery cable at starter solenoid. Replaces #1246177 for all models.
C-0704 . . . . . $7.75/ea.

Electrical, Headlight

❑Grommet, electric wire through body for head and tail lights. 3/8" I.D. for 11/16" hole. Some models, as required.
B-0047 . . . . . $1.25/ea.

Electrical, Tail Light

❑Grommet, electric wire through body for head and tail lights, etc. 3/8" I.D. for 11/16" hole. Some models, as required.
B-0047 . . . . . $1.25/ea.

❑Mounting pads, tail light, right and left. Replaces #1304392-3, excellent job, fully detailed. Series 40 and 60 only.
B-0101 . . . . . $21.00/pr.

❑Mounting pad, tail light. Replaces #1304394-5. Series 80 and 90.
B-0057 . . . . . $28.00/pr.

Electrical, Parking Light

❑Pad, parking light (fender light). Replaces #1304744. All Series.
B-0064 . . . . . $18.75/pr.

Electrical, Misc. Lighting

❑Grommet, license lamp socket. May fit earlier years. Replaces #922243. Buick Series 40 & 60 most models.
B-0395 . . . . . $2.50/ea.

❑Pad, rear license lamp and trunk handle body. Replaces #1307560. Many models.
B-0034 . . . . . $12.25/ea.

Accelerator Pedal

❑Pad, accelerator pedal. Replaces #1304152. Rubber flanges all around as original to fit over pedal carcass.
B-0038 . . . . . $17.75/ea.

Fuel System

❑Rubber cover, automatic choke cable at carburetor. Replaces #1861492. Exact copy. All models.
B-0243 . . . . . $14.25/ea.

❑Bumper, rubber, fuel filler door, for 1/8" to 5/32" hole, 5/32" thick pad, 5/16" diameter. Many models, as required.
B-0127 . . . . . $0.90/ea.

❑Bumper, rubber, fuel filler door, for 1/8" to 5/32" hole, 1/4" thick pad, 5/16" diameter. Many models, as required.
B-0128 . . . . . $0.90/ea.

Clutch & Brake Pedal Pad

❑Pad, brake and clutch pedals full slip-over type as original. Replaces #1257590, #1293479. Close copy, fine detail. Series 80, 90.
B-0049-A (BLACK) . . . $22.50/pr.

❑Pad, clutch and brake pedal. Replaces #493728, perfect copy, fine detail. Series 40 & 60.
B-0054-A (BLACK) . . . $15.00/pr.

Transmission Mounts

❑Pad, transmission mounting upper and lower. Replaces #1305964 upper, and #1302573 lower. Revulcanizing service only. Send in your original steel plates and tube and we will revulcanize with top quality rubber to new condition. Allow 3 weeks. Series 40 only.
B-0312 . . . . . $44.00/set

❑Pad assembly, transmission support, lower. Replaces #1302573. Revulcanizing service only. New rubber vulcanized to your old steel core. Send in old plate and sleeve and allow 3 weeks. All Series 40.
B-0296 . . . . . $22.50/ea.

❑Insulator blocks, transmission support, upper and lower. These blocks aren't vulcanized to steel, but are installed in shells at time of assembly like original. Replaces #1305236, 1304840, 1310645, 47. Series 60, 80, 90.
B-0335 . . . . . $24.75/pr.

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Index to Volume VI

Bill,

Here is the index for last year's issues. Sorry to take so long, but you know how things go. By the way, incase you ever get stuck for a filler, here is a recipe my wife sends along as one which really sticks to your ribs and, incidentaly, makes a great wheel block for emergency road repairs:

Favorite Fruitcake:

15 cups flour
red thingies
green thingies
syrup
glue

Mix ingredients. Bake. Spray with hair spray or lacquer.

Happy holidays!

GLENN

THE TORQUE TUBE

1937-38 Buick Club Newsletter Index

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September 1987 - August 1988

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Submitted by:

Glenn L. Seymour #345
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Potsdam, NY 13676